

Human Types in Congress

Continued from Preceding Page

what they like to hear in favor of high tariff and against the wicked Democrats.

Nervousness in speaking is not always because of inexperience, as one incident will serve to show. A Southern member, an able and experienced lawyer, I was told, when he spoke gave the official reporters a smart task to take him stenographically, so rapidly he talked. The most trifling interruption made him painfully nervous but did not slacken his speed; increased it, rather. One day we chanced to be sitting together when he undertook to call up a bill local in its application to his district. His parliamentary tactics were faulty and some members willfully baited him to throw him into his machine gun speed of talking. The faster he talked the more he was baited, and the worse became his case under the rules. When he closely approached hysterics Mr. McCall of Massachusetts, later Governor of his State, a sterling, dignified gentleman, rose and asked the distressed gentleman if he would yield. "I decline to yield further," was the exasperated reply.

"Yield," I whispered to him. "Mr. McCall will help you."

"I yield," he muttered.

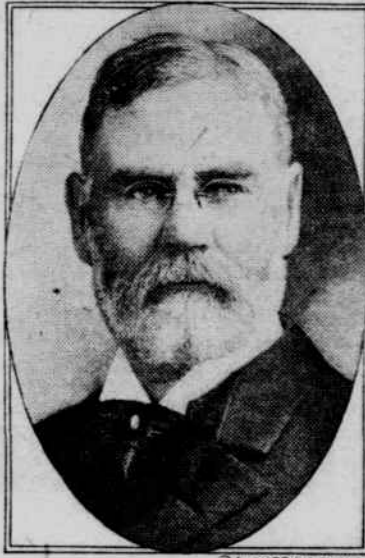
Thereupon Mr. McCall quietly, clearly, straightened out the parliamentary tangle; the member got his bill up and passed it.

"Who was the Republican who helped me?" he then asked. I told him. "He's a fine gentleman, but I never heard of him," the Southerner said.

That was not an unusual case; it is not uncommon to hear an old member ask "Who is he?" when some member, perhaps on the same side of the middle aisle, rises after four or five years' service to make his first speech.

Contrasts Among Lawmakers.

An interesting contrast is seen in the frequent colloquies between Frank W. Mondell, Republican floor leader, and Finis J. Garrett, a Democratic parliamentary authority. Mondell is self-educated and made a good job of that usually patchwork undertaking. He does not seem to have done



James R. Mann

chusetts, now Speaker. After the long and often technical hearings on an appropriation bill are over then follows the tedious work of assembling it, putting it into legislative shape, checking up the mass of figures, taking the many finished parts of an intricate piece of machinery manufactured by sub-committees and dumped on a table and assembling them into a smoothly working machine. Fitzgerald told me that in that exacting work, which often kept them in the committee rooms fourteen hours a day, Gillett was his most willing and efficient assistant. Then followed the peculiar sequence: when a bill which had been harmoniously labored over by those two men was called up by Fitzgerald he made what is called the exposition speech, explained its many items and, of course, praised it as a whole. Promptly, after the close of the committee chairman's speech, Gillett pitched into the bill vigorously, condemning its extravagance, inconsistencies, its bungling, its danger, its general deviltry. These two speeches having been made, Gillett and Fitzgerald would softly, inconspicuously fade away, hurry to Gillett's waiting automobile and drive out to a golf club for a friendly round of the links. Gillett, aristocratic, austere, and Fitzgerald, democratic, genial, because of their respective political positions fought each other without gloves over every appropriation bill they prepared, then took their recreation together with the zest of two friendly schoolboys.

One other contrast will show how manifoldly unlike are members; how absurd is the prevalent belief that they can be shown in a composite picture which faintly resembles any of them. Oscar W. Underwood, Alabama, was chairman of the Ways and Means Committee which prepared the tariff bill bearing his name, and Joseph W. Fordney, Michigan, was the Republican ranking member of the committee. In the House Underwood was its chief proponent, Fordney its chief opponent, and each had its specialists—a majority committeeman in charge of each schedule, a minority member crammed for opposition to each schedule. Thus the work of the offense and defense was assigned to captains, leaving the general conduct of battle in charge of Commanders Underwood and Fordney, their chief concern being the economic principles involved in the bill—tariff for revenue, tariff for protection.

Underwood, correctly dressed, smooth shaven, quiet, even-voiced, almost motionless at his desk, makes his points without gestures, without modifying his somewhat famous enigmatical smile; Fordney, his loose, short jacket curling up about his neck as he gesticulates with the wide sweeping swings of a drill hammer, his mustache pugnaciously bristling, his voice a roar, makes his points in a manner to suggest a battle tank in action, a locomotive running wild. In debate they were a drama of antithesis; Underwood as if in amiable conversation; Fordney, glaring, menacing, beseeching, denouncing, commanding, ridiculing, striding across the well from which he speaks; but when he finishes, the chamber still echoing with his crashing peroration, ringing with partisan cheers, he passes close enough to Underwood to whisper in friendly tone—I have

Continued on Following Page.

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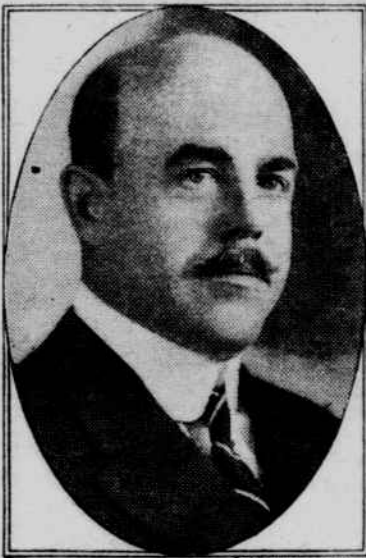
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Nicholas Longworth

any serious reading until he was eighteen years old, for until that age, beginning at six, he worked on a farm. But he began along a well selected line and pursued it with determination until he had acquired an enviable knowledge of political history, economics, Government, finance, something of engineering, and, judging from his extensive and varied vocabulary, he must also have done a little reading in polite literature. Garrett had an academic education and a teacher's training, which equipment, welded onto a natural aptitude for satire, makes the clashes between him and Mondell a battle of wholly unlike intellectual armament; Mondell deliberate, suave; Garrett swift, caustic.

Friendships in the House are formed not infrequently across the center aisle, and one such was a source of innocent amusement to the well informed. During my service in the House John J. Fitzgerald, Democrat, of New York, was chairman of the hardest worked and most important committee in Congress, the Committee on Appropriations. The ranking Republican member was Frederick H. Gillett of Massa-